

Message Text

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INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 047459

FOR THE AMBASSADOR GENEVA FOR MATHEA FALCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: CBS TELEVISION PROGRAM ON COCAINE

REF: (A) BOGOTA 1629; (B) GENEVA 6259; (C) STATE 046667

1. DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT YOU SHOULD GO AHEAD WITH
INTERVIEW, AND CONCURS IN THE GENERAL LINE WITH REGARD TO
CORRUPTION PROPOSED IN REFTEL A. HOWEVER, WE SUGGEST A
FEW CHANGES IN WORDING IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE
MISUNDERSTANDINGS. YOUR PROPOSED RESPONSE, INCORPORATING
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CHANGES SUGGESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT, NOW READS AS FOLLOWS:

2. "CORRUPTION SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THOSE FACETS OF THE HUMAN
CONDITION THAT IS ALWAYS WITH US. OF COURSE, THERE IS
CORRUPTION IN COLOMBIA AS THERE IS IN ANY NUMBER OF
COUNTRIES, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, THE U.S. I BELIEVE IT IS
UNJUST, HOWEVER, TO INDICT A WHOLE SOCIETY.

3. "I BELIEVE THAT THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO AN EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS INTERDICTION PROGRAM HAS BEEN THE FACT THAT COLOMBIAN INSTITUTIONS WERE NOT DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH SUCH MODERN PROBLEMS AS DRUG TRAFFICKING. OUR MAJOR EMPHASIS IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN TO CREATE MORE EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS AND MODES OF COOPERATION, AND TO TRAIN AND EQUIP APPROPRIATELY SELECT PERSONNEL. I MIGHT ADD THAT I HAVE RECEIVED NOTHING BUT COOPERATION AND SUPPORT SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN BOGOTA FROM THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT IN THIS ENDEAVOR. THIS INCLUDES A BROAD GAMUT OF OFFICIALS, FROM THE PRESIDENT ON DOWN. I CAN CITE THE FOREIGN MINISTER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND A NUMBER OF OTHER OFFICIALS AT VARIOUS LEVELS. YET WE ALL AGREE THAT MORE EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS INTERDICTION MEASURES NEED TO BE TAKEN, AND ARE WORKING TOWARD THAT END.

4. "IN A RELATED CONTEXT I BELIEVE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING ARE MUCH MORE PRONOUNCED IN COLOMBIA THAN THEY ARE IN THE UNITED STATES. THE PRICE OF A SNORT OF COCAINE IN SOME PARTS OF THE U.S. IS NOW AS HIGH AS U.S. DOLS 100. (FYI: ACCORDING TO LATEST DEA INFORMATION, PRICE OF A SNORT IN NEW YORK CITY IS ABOUT DOLS 25, BUT IN SOME CITIES IN UPSTATE NEW YORK IT APPROACHES DOLS 100). OUR OBJECTIVE IS A REALISTIC ONE OF KEEPING CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PRICE HIGH, SO THAT IT DOES NOT BECOME A DRUG OF MASS CONSUMPTION. I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN DO THAT WITH THE MEANS AT OUR DISPOSAL. IN COLOMBIA, THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO COPE WITH THE RATE OF INFLATION HAVE BEEN BEDEVILED BY THIS INFLUX OF EASY MONEY. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN GREAT CONCERN ON THE POSSIBLE INTRUSION IN POLITICS ON THE PART OF TRAFFICKERS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THEIR ENORMOUS LIQUIDITY. A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN EVIDENT IN THE COLOMBIAN PRESS, CONCERNING SUCH THINGS AS THE INCREASED COST OF CAMPAIGNING IN CERTAIN DISTRICTS AND THE OUTRIGHT BUYING OF VOTES. MANY POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT REPRESENTATIVES DIRECTLY BEHOLDEN TO TRAFFICKERS WILL EMERGE IN THE NEXT LEGISLATURE. THERE IS A SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY THAT THE "EMERGING CLASS", AS IT IS CALLED IN COLOMBIA, POSES A DISTINCT THREAT TO COLOMBIAN INSTITUTIONS. I AM CONVINCED THAT THESE CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY WEIGHED BY

COLOMBIAN POLITICAL LEADERS, AND COMPRISE ONE OF SEVERAL CAUSES FOR THE PRESENT PROMISING LEVEL OF COOPERATION."
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